

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Previously amended): A method of advancing a natural casing along the length of a hollow meat stuffing tube towards a twisting mechanism, comprising,
placing a hollow natural casing on the outside surface of a hollow stuffing tube having a meat emulsion discharge end, placing a textured continuous belt adjacent and parallel to the stuffing tube in engagement with the casing on the stuffing tube, and compressively forcing the casing into engagement with an outside surface of the stuffing tube, and rotating the textured continuous belt to slide the casing towards the discharge end of the stuffing tube and into the twisting mechanism.

Claim 2 (Previously amended): A machine for stuffing natural casings with emulsion, comprising,
a hollow meat stuffing tube positioned adjacent a twisting mechanism on the machine having a first end and a discharge end for extruding emulsion into a natural casing on an outer surface of the stuffing tube, and
a textured belt assembly mounted adjacent and parallel to the stuffing tube near the discharge end and having a continuous belt with a plurality of grooves that loops around a pair of rollers, wherein the textured belt assembly longitudinally moves the casing about the stuffing tube and towards the discharge end and into the twisting mechanism.

Claims 3 (Original): The machine of claim 2 wherein the rollers are mounted on fixed axles.

Claim 4 (Original): The machine of claim 2 wherein only one of the rollers is mounted on a fixed axle such that the textured belt assembly is free to pivot about the fixed axle.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A method of advancing a natural casing along the length of a hollow meat stuffing tube towards a twisting mechanism, comprising,

placing a hollow natural casing on the outside surface of a hollow stuffing tube having a top surface and a meat emulsion discharge end,

placing a textured continuous belt adjacent and ~~parallel~~-only above ~~to~~ the top surface of the stuffing tube in engagement with the casing on the stuffing tube, and compressively forcing the casing into engagement with an outside surface of the stuffing tube, and

rotating the textured continuous belt to slide the casing towards the discharge end of the stuffing tube and into the twisting mechanism.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A machine for stuffing natural casings with emulsion, comprising,

a hollow meat stuffing tube having a top surface positioned adjacent a twisting mechanism on the machine having a first end and a discharge end for extruding emulsion into a natural casing on an outer surface of the stuffing tube, and

a textured belt assembly mounted adjacent and ~~parallel~~-only above ~~to~~ the top surface of the stuffing tube near the discharge end and having a continuous belt with a plurality of grooves

that loops around a pair of rollers, wherein the textured belt assembly longitudinally moves the casing about the stuffing tube and towards the discharge end and into the twisting mechanism.